



The Holy See

***DISCORSO DI SUA SANTITÀ PIO PP. XII
AD UN GRUPPO DI MEMBRI DELLA «GUARDIA
SIOCHANA BRANCH OF THE SACRED HEART»****

Castel Gandolfo - Giovedì, 13 settembre 1956

Early beloved sons and daughters! Children of Catholic Ireland, who could be more welcome in the home of Christ's Vicar? Your presence always brings joy and consolation; because an Irish pilgrimage at once reminds one of the high and holy mission given by Providence to an entire nation, an eminently apostolic mission with the whole world for the exercise of its zeal; and one bows in humble, reverent admiration before the inscrutable wisdom of God directing the fulfillment of that mission. It shines out so luminously from the pages that tell the story of Ireland's Faith. « Who then will separate us from the love of Christ, » was the vibrant challenge of St. Paul; « will affliction or distress or persecution or hunger or nakedness or peril of the sword?... Yet in all this we are conquerors through Him who has loved us » (*Rom. 8, 35*). May not St. Patrick, speaking for his children, echo the Apostle of the Gentiles? Like a rock amid the waves, relentlessly returning over the ages, the Faith of Ireland with her filial loyalty to the See of Peter has remained unshaken. Oh, never forget the glory of the past; thus may its brightness still shine on the hills and lowlands, the country-side and the cities of your people. But it is not of this that We would speak to you today.

Let Us rather open Our paternal heart and share with you very briefly one or two anxious thoughts. The first is suggested by the Association represented by practically all of you here present. Proverbially Ireland is a land that combines the smile and the tear. And alas, what a flood of tears, drowning out the joy and laughter of home and hearth, has poured through the shattered dyke of temperance! Your Pioneer Total Abstinence Association of the Sacred Heart is a valiant attempt, fortified by a genuinely Pauline spirit of self-denial for the spiritual advantage and need of one's neighbours, to repair and strengthen that indispensably necessary dyke, and We have only words of praise for your generous charity.

Our anxiety indeed goes beyond Ireland. In more than on country of the world intemperance in drink leading so often to alcoholism has become today a harrowing menace and an actual spiritual tragedy for thousands of souls redeemed by the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ. Who will number the homes broken by this sin? Who will weigh the amount of good for souls left undone because of this sin? It is a social evil and a spiritual deterioration that calls for the enlightened study and self-sacrificing zeal of every apostle, lay and cleric. With heavy heart We contemplate the extensive area of blighted hopes, and with grateful affection We bless those who by word and especially example set themselves to remove the cause of the evil.

Then We cannot help feeling some anxiety, when We reflect on the continued emigration of so many of your people from the land of their fathers. Will their Faith continue to be their guiding and protecting star? Will it still be the priceless inheritance received so We might say casually from those who stood ready to give their life in its defence? To them the thought never occurred that their religion could have a price. Will the Faith, that flourished in the sheltered garden at home, still thrive in an atmosphere, that may be chilling and frosty? A comfortable materialism too easily takes possession of a man in the hard hour of ill fortune and stealthily may come to filch from him what deep down in his heart he knows is his highest and best good. Your devoted and beloved Bishops are alert to the danger, and their guidance will afford protection to those who must leave, while the special need of the immigrant will be another sharp spur to the apostolic ambitions of Our dear and worthy sons, — God's priests busy in the vineyard of the Lord.

And now to you, beloved sons and daughters of Catholic Ireland, We impart the Apostolic Benediction; and We extend it to all your loved dear ones at home. May it be a pledge of God's richest blessings on you and on your dear Ireland.

**Discorsi e Radiomessaggi di Sua Santità Pio XII, XVIII,*

Diciottesimo anno di Pontificato, 2 marzo 1956 1° marzo 1957, pp. 439 - 440

Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana